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feb. '97
make your personality sizzle!
great gifts to make
Heart to Heart
A Teen Girl's Passage to India
what kind of friend are you?
take our quiz!

brio®

A Focus on the Family magazine for teen girls

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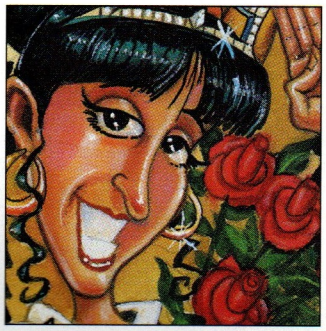

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You Can't Turn Off Real Life...

Not long ago, a group of us went to see what life was like for children in Ecuador. We didn't know exactly what was waiting for us there. But on the plane to Ecuador one of the guys said, "This trip will be hard because it won't be like a video on poverty you can turn off and walk away from. You can't turn off real life."

He was right!

Riding the bus through Guayaquil, a coastal city in Ecuador, was an experience in itself. "Nothing prepared me for this." — "I've never seen this kind of poverty in my life." — "I can't get over the extremes."

The extremes hit all of us. There were some really nice parts of Guayaquil, and then, all of a sudden, we were in really brutal surroundings.

So the Compassion-assisted project we visited that day was like an oasis. Kids there were getting an education, health care (including food), Christian training and safe recreation all because they were sponsored through Compassion International.

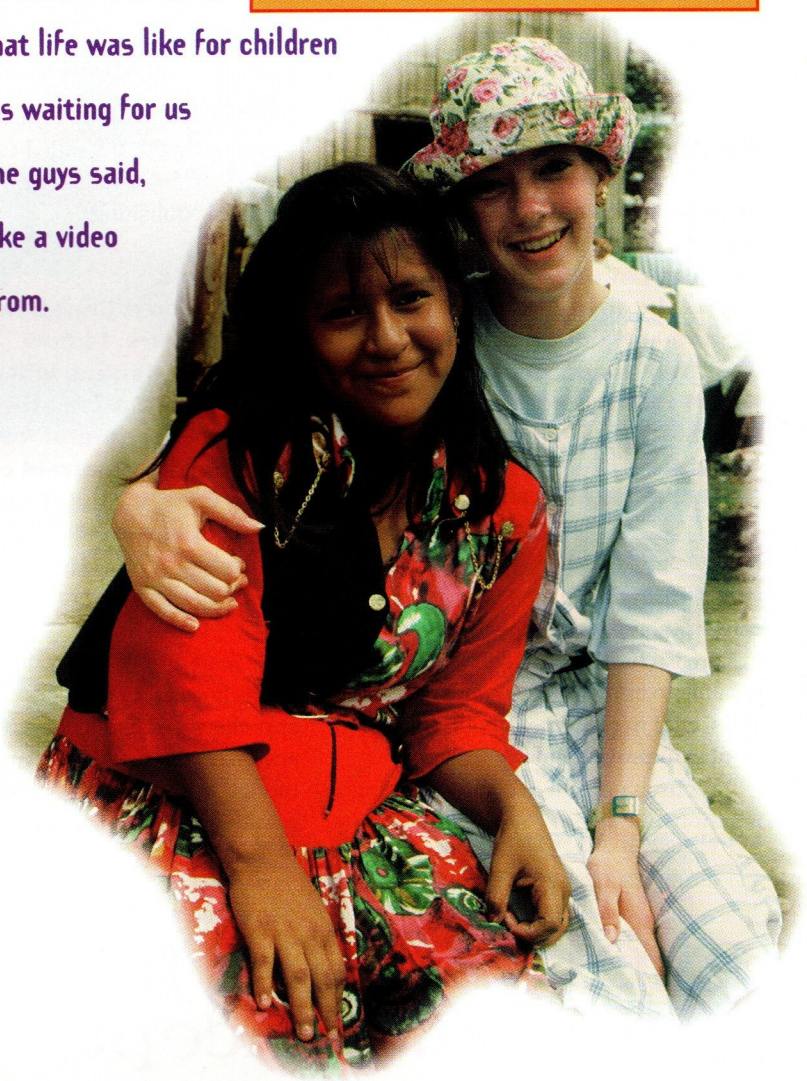
Some of us met our sponsored children that day. We saw several of their homes. We met some of their parents. We saw the extreme difference sponsorship can make in a child's life.

You may never travel overseas, but you can make a huge difference in a needy child's life. Sponsor through Compassion International.

You'll get to know your child right away through the information kit Compassion sends you when you begin. You and your sponsored child can correspond. You can even send funds for gifts at Christmas, birthdays, or just as an extra reminder that your're pulling for him.

You can be a hero to a kid who needs you. Join us. We have no question that sponsorhsip helps kids.

Make an extreme difference in a needy child's life today.



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dear Susie

BY SUSIE SHELLENBERGER

Dear Susie:

I can never talk to my boyfriend. Either I can't think of something to say, or I'm afraid that I might say something stupid. I can always talk to my friends—just not him. We just don't talk much at all. How can I start talking more so I won't lose him?

Quiet
High Point, N.J.

Dear Quiet:

It's frustrating to *want* to carry on a conversation but not know exactly where to start, isn't it? I'm proud of you for wanting to improve your communication skills, but I'm concerned about *why* you want to improve them.

If your main goal in communicating is simply not to lose your boyfriend, it makes me wonder if you're more interested in having a boyfriend than you are in him as a person.

Yes, it feels good to have a boyfriend. It may make you feel temporarily secure, included and wanted. But these are not good reasons at all for establishing a relationship with anyone. Real friendships are built on shared interests, shared values and shared experiences.

If you're worried about looking or sounding stupid, then there obviously isn't much trust between you and your boyfriend. There are several books on the market that are filled with questions geared to getting conversations started. I'll include one on the envelope inside this magazine in case you're interested in requesting it. It's called *Opening Lines: Conversation Starters* (Broadman & Holman publishing).

Dear Susie:

I've been a Christian for two years. I know that all Christians will go to heaven, but I'm still scared. Is it normal for a Christian to be afraid of dying even though I know I'll go to heaven?

Scared to Death
Fort Worth, Texas

Dear Scared:

It's normal for us to be apprehensive—or even frightened—of the unknown. Even though that unknown element may be a *good* thing, if we don't know much about it we may still feel an uncertainty or sense of dread.

A couple in my church recently gave me a birthday gift certificate for a hot-air balloon ride. Even though this was something I had wanted to do all my life, I was pretty scared when it came time to lift off. Why? It wasn't that I didn't want to experience it—I was simply facing the unknown.

Heaven is like that. It's the unknown. We know a *little* about it from Christ's description in the Bible, but it's actually beyond our comprehension. Like my hot-air balloon ride, we *know* it's going to be incredible. We *know* we're going to love it once we get there, but until we do, it's okay to be apprehensive.

Dear Susie:

I love *Brio*, but it's pretty thin. I read the whole thing in one sitting. Have you ever thought of adding more to it? I'm sure all our *Brio* sisses would appreciate it!

Big Fan
Rockford, Ill.

I love Brio, but it's pretty thin. I read the whole thing in one sitting.

Dear BF:

It's great you're enjoying *Brio* so much! We, the magazine staff, sure have a fun time putting it together each month. You might be interested to know that we *have* increased the size of the magazine. We started out in 1990 as a 24-page publication. We now run six 40-page issues and six 32-page issues a year. Our days of 24-page *Brio*s are over.

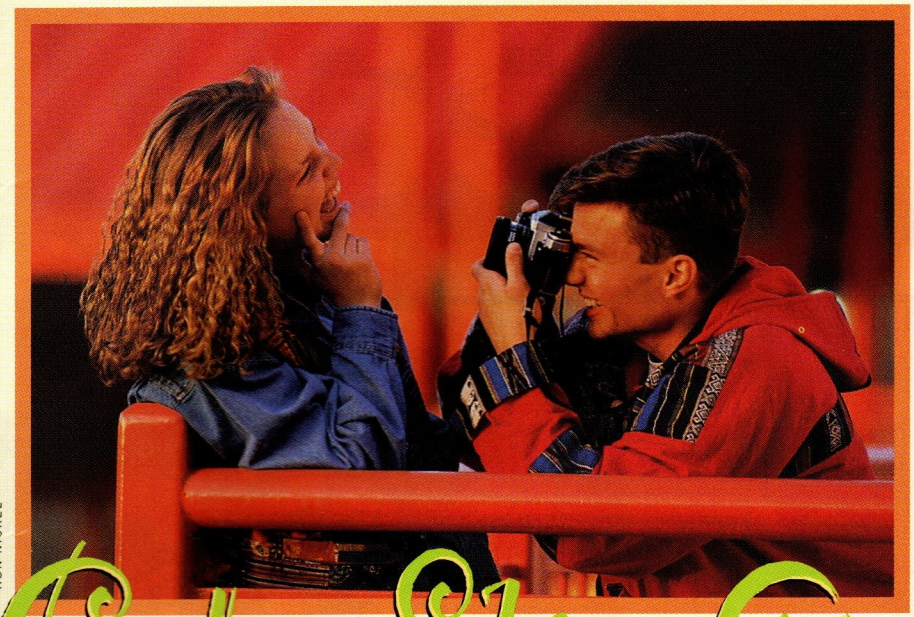
Personally, we'd love to do even more than that. We think it would be super if *Brio* could be 60 or more pages. Unfortunately, we just don't have the funds to make that happen.

Producing magazines is expensive, and we try to be very careful with the money our supporters send us. Each 32-page issue costs approximately $80,000 to produce (excluding salaries). You've probably noticed that, unlike most secular periodicals, *Brio* doesn't include many advertisements. In order to lengthen our magazine, we would have to fill more of our pages with ads. Rather than do that, we'd prefer to keep providing you with fun and encouraging material. Thanks for understanding. ✶

Advice on everything from A to Z... except how far a kangaroo can hop.

Got a Question?

Send it to: Dear Susie
Brio Magazine
Colorado Springs, CO
80995



RON NICKEL

Get a Shine On

by Sarah Meekhof

Do you have a special guy friend, one who is really on your wavelength? If so, this quiz is for you. Find out what it takes to shine up your friendship and make it SPARKLE!

1. Can you let loose and really *laugh* with each other?

5 Definitely — 4 — 3 Sometimes — 2 — 1 Never

2. Do you resolve hurt feelings, rather than ignore them and hope they go away?

5 Always — 4 — 3 Maybe — 2 — 1 Nope

3. Do you guard each other's secrets?

5 Absolutely — 4 — 3 Not really — 2 — 1 No

4. When you disagree, can you talk things through to a satisfactory conclusion?

5 No problem — 4 — 3 Once in a while — 2 — 1 No way

5. Are you free to spend time with other friends?

5 Of course — 4 — 3 Hmm . . . — 2 — 1 I wish

6. Do you encourage each other to go to church and to grow spiritually?

5 No question — 4 — 3 So-so — 2 — 1 What?

7. Do you get along with each other's parents?

5 All the time — 4 — 3 It depends — 2 — 1 No

8. Do you respect his other friends?

5 You bet — 4 — 3 Not always — 2 — 1 Get real

9. Do you pursue interests and activities that don't include each other?

5 It's a given — 4 — 3 Not much — 2 — 1 Never

10. Do you hold grudges in your relationship?

5 Yes — 4 — 3 Sometimes — 2 — 1 Never

11. Is there equal giving on both sides?

5 Better believe it — 4 — 3 If we're lucky — 2 — 1 Are you kidding?

12. Can you honestly confront each other?

5 Yes — 4 — 3 It depends — 2 — 1 No

13. Do you allow each other to change?

5 Yeah — 4 — 3 We try — 2 — 1 Get real

14. Do you include others in the circle of your friendship?

5 Of course — 4 — 3 Once in a while — 2 — 1 Get lost

15. Is it clear that the relationship is only friendship—or do you send mixed signals to one another?

5 Absolutely — 4 — 3 Well . . . — 2 — 1 It's vague

Scoring:

57-75 points: Wow! Your friendship is dazzling! Not only do you have good communication, you're sensitive and encouraging to each other. Enjoy the unique relationship!

30-56 points: Not bad. You're on the right track, but a few things could use some work. With a little effort, you can make your friendship really shine!

20-29 points: Hmm. Your friendship could definitely use some polish! Take a look at the quiz, search out your problem areas, and get going on a positive relationship NOW!

Below 20 points: Your relationship is really *dim*. You're going to have to work awfully hard to make it healthy. Ask yourself: Is it worth it?

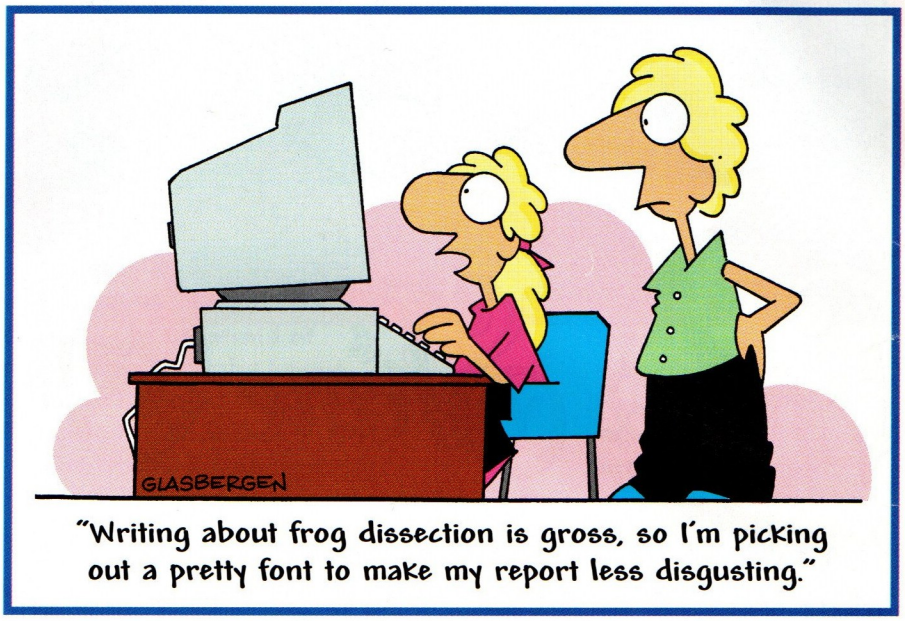
ask dr. paul

BY PAUL ROTHWELL, M.D.

I have really bad breath and nothing seems to help. I've tried mouthwash, breath mints and frequent brushing. What else can I do?

My first bit of advice is to see your dentist. He or she can check for gum disease and give you a good cleaning. It's also a good idea to make sure you're brushing properly.

I have braces (can you believe it—a grandpa with braces?!), and all of us wearing them need to pay special attention to dental hygiene. The good news is that there is always hope for conquering bad breath. Professional help is the key.



My face chaps easily. I've tried putting lotion on it, but that doesn't help. What can I do?

Though oily skin is a more common problem with teen girls than dry skin, many girls still struggle with dryness. This can be caused by several things, including the following:

* Overexposure to cold weather in winter.

* Excessive sun exposure in the spring and summer.

* Too much washing. (This removes necessary oils and natural skin lubricants.)

* Heavy use of acne medications. (These also remove oils and cause exfoliation—flaking off of the treated skin.)

A product called Moisturel can be purchased over the counter and is recommended by many dermotologists for treatment of dry skin. It's safe and won't lead to the development of acne.

My body seems to be out of proportion. My calves are large, and when I exercise they seem to get bigger. But if I don't exercise I gain weight. Help!

As you change from a girl to a young woman, you will seem to be "out of proportion." Initially, your hips will widen and, at some point, you will probably have a growth spurt. In addition, your breasts will start to develop and you may notice they are slightly different in size. It will become easier for you to gain weight—particularly in your legs. All of this is part of the normal process of growing up. As awkward as it may seem, God is changing you into a beautiful young woman. Do the most with the body God has given you—practice healthy eating habits and exercise regularly.

I've heard that participating in sports may cause problems with my period. Can too much exercise be bad for a girl my age?

Exercise is essential for a healthy body, but too much *can* be harmful. Recently I read an article in a medical journal that described "Female Athlete Triad." This disorder has been studied by the American College of Sports Medicine and consists of three problems—eating disorders, amenorrhea (no periods) and osteoporosis (lack of calcium in the bones). Female Athlete Triad could account for the psychological scars and broken bones seen in many young women who become *obsessed* with sports. Don't get me wrong: I'm very proud of the accomplishments in women's athletics. However, I'm concerned that *excessive* exercise may cause long-term problems in girls your age. If you're having any of the above problems, see your doctor *now!* ★

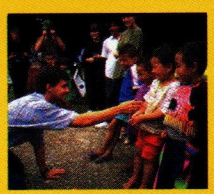
These are the opinions of one physician and not necessarily those of Focus on the Family. In similar cases, you should consult your own physician.

Got a medical Question for Dr. Paul?

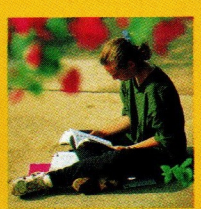
Send it to: Ask Dr. Paul
Brio Magazine
Colorado Springs, CO 80995

KISS YOUR CUSHY SUMMER GOOD-BYE

[We have something more exciting in mind.]

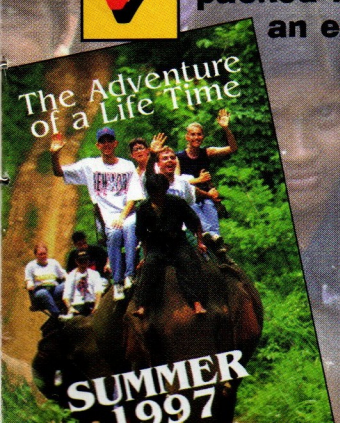


An adventurous Teen Mania mission trip is no vacation. It's your chance to do something meaningful with your summer. See exotic lands. Make new friends. And, most of all, help bring others to Christ.



Find out more about the life-changing Teen Mania mission trips that draw over 2,300 young people like you to 20 foreign countries each year. Call or write for your free Teen Mania brochure today. And get ready to kiss your cushy summer good-bye.

YES! Rush me my FREE, 24-page brochure packed with everything I need to know about an exciting Teen Mania mission trip!



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON NICKEL

God Said . . . I Said

This is a private conversation.
DON'T READ . . .
unless you enjoy eavesdropping.

God Said: I love you.

I Said: Yeah, I know.

Do you *really* know?

Sure. God is love. Love is God. God is love.

But do you *believe?*

You're kidding, right? I've had John 3:16 memorized since I was 8.

But do you really *believe* it? In other words, are you living your life by it?

Living my life by it?

Meaning . . . if you really *know* it and *believe* it, how are you allowing it to affect the way you live?

Well . . . I don't know that it actually *affects* me. . . .

It *could.* In fact, your entire life can be better when you *really* buy into the fact that I LOVE YOU.

I *think* I've bought into it, Lord.

Give me an example.

Okay. Uh . . . yesterday, I really wanted to watch reruns of my favorite TV show when I got home from school, but my little sister was watching "Road Runner." Instead of trying to talk her into switching channels, I just sat down and watched it with her. Felt kind of good to do the right thing instead of demanding my own way. Later, when I went to bed, I knew You were smiling at me.

You're right. I was. I loved you so much right then, I felt like I was going to burst.

And I could feel it!

But you know what?

What?

I felt the very same love for you this morning when you snubbed Juli between first and second period.

Did you hear what she was saying about me? It was so unfair! So untrue! Who does she think she is? Lord, I know I should have been kind, but I just felt so much anger. I'm sorry.

I know. But even then—when you *should* have been forgiving, I was bursting with love for you.

But, God, how *could* You? I . . .

And last Thursday. Remember that pop quiz in history?

I was hoping You hadn't noticed.

I'm God. I notice *everything.* That's part of the job.

Well, I just wasn't prepared. I mean, after all . . . I went to youth group on Wednesday night. I never got a chance to study. So when Mrs. Woodard tossed a quiz at us at the last minute . . . well, I didn't have a choice. I *had* to cheat.

You *always* have a choice.

I know it was wrong. And I feel gross about it. But it's not like I make a practice of doing that. I *never* cheat.

Still—in that moment—even when you were clearly doing something that you knew was wrong . . . I was bursting with love for you.

I feel so guilty.

And last Saturday night?

Can we just skip over this one?

When you came in at 12:30 a.m.—30 minutes past your curfew. . . .

Well, God, it's not like I actually lied.

And Sunday morning at the breakfast table when your dad said, "What time did you come in last night, Kelli?" And you said . . .

All I said was, "Are you kidding, Dad? I know my curfew is midnight. Think I'd even *consider* breaking it?"

Which was deceptive.

But true. Cuz I do know when my curfew is.

But false because you not only *considered* breaking it—you *broke* it. And deceptive because you

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RU fed up with HO-HUM, PLAIN VANILLA Christianity?
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God Said: I love you.

actually deceived your dad into thinking you came in on time when you really didn't.

Well . . . at least I didn't *lie*.

What IS a lie?

That's easy. It's saying something happened when it didn't.

Hmmm. And you led your dad into believing you were in at midnight. Isn't that . . .

Saying something happened when it didn't? No. Yes. I mean, uh . . . I don't know. Look, God, isn't it about time for my devotions or something? This is getting pretty heavy. I really ought to go now. You know—read my Bible or something.

Well, you're *half* right. Devotions is simply a term for spending time with Me. Part of that time should be spent reading My Word—the Bible—and the other part should be talking with Me.

And I have. It's been great, God. Gotta go.

AND listening to what I have to say.

Go on.

Even then . . . early Sunday morning . . . when you were sneaking in past your curfew and lying about it a few hours later, I was bursting with love for you.

God, stop. Please. I can't handle this. I . . . I'm so ashamed.

And I love you.

I'm so far from what I should be.

And I love you.

So incomplete from whom You've called me to be.

And I love you.

I fail so much.

And I love you.

I do stuff I know I shouldn't.

And I love you.

Please forgive me, Father. I am so sorry.

You're forgiven. And on top of that . . . why don't we just wipe the slate clean?

You mean? . . .

Let's live as though these things never even happened.

But . . .

As of now, I choose to forget them.

But, God. How can You do that?

I love you.

I know, but . . . how can You love me when I'm a jerk?

My child, I'm hurt when you disobey Me. And, like a loving parent, I'll correct you and call you to obedience. But I'll *never* stop loving you.

You mean even when I slip and talk bad about Jason . . .

My Holy Spirit will prick your conscience, and I'll remind you that's wrong. You'll need to ask My forgiveness. But I still love you.

Well, what about the times I snap back to Mom and Dad?

I'll rebuke you and correct you and call you to submit to their authority. But My love for you is the same as if you'd *never* talked back.

And when others don't like me? When I don't make the volleyball team? What about when I run for class office and get only 28 votes?

Even then. My love remains the same. I'm bursting for you.

But when I've gained six pounds? And when I'm not careful about what I eat? And when I have zits on my nose? And . . .

And even then. I *love* you—regardless of what you look like and act like. Learn to live and grow in My love. Let it affect every single area of your life.

I think I'm beginning to understand.

When you really learn to accept My unconditional love for you—you can't help but be changed.

I . . . I'm *getting* it. YOU love *me* so much, I want to love You back. I really do, Jesus. It's clear now. Oh, Father! I want to please You. I want to obey You. I want to love you with my lifestyle. I want others to SEE You in my actions and reactions.

Yes!

I gotta go, Lord.

Oh?

Yeah. I need to talk to Mrs. Woodard about last week's quiz.

I'm proud of you.

And then I'm gonna call Dad at the office. *

by Sarah Meekhof

Leading Ladies

Find out how much you know about the women in the Bible!

Bold. Radical. Enthusiastic. Did you know that these words describe women in the Bible? Answer the following 10 questions to test *your* Bible knowledge!

1. This woman was raised from the dead by Peter.
   a. Delilah
   b. Susannah
   c. Tabitha

2. This woman gave birth in a stable.
   a. Miriam
   b. Mary
   c. Rachel

3. She lied to God about the price of land and was struck dead because of it.
   a. Naomi
   b. Orpah
   c. Sapphira

4. She gave birth to a son when she was 90 years old.
   a. Ruth
   b. Sarah
   c. Rebekah

5. Because she betrayed his confidence, a man of God was released to the Philistines to become a slave.
   a. Delilah
   b. Priscilla
   c. Leah

6. This woman saved two Jewish spies.
   a. Rahab
   b. Hannah
   c. Joanna

7. She instructed her daughter to ask for John the Baptist's head on a platter.
   a. Lydia
   b. Herodias
   c. Jezebel

8. This woman was a prophetess and judge of Israel.
   a. Leah
   b. Tamar
   c. Deborah

9. Her disobedience caused her to be banished from an outdoor paradise.
   a. Bathsheba
   b. Eve
   c. Elizabeth

10. After winning a beauty contest, this woman was crowned queen.
   a. Naomi
   b. Esther
   c. Salome

Answers:

1. c (Acts 9:36-41)
2. b (Luke 2:1-7)
3. c (Acts 5:1-10)
4. b (Genesis 17:15-19)
5. a (Judges 16:18-21)
6. a (Joshua 2:1-6)
7. b (Matthew 14:1-11)
8. c (Judges 4:4)
9. b (Genesis 3:1-6, 20-24)
10. b (Esther 2:17-18)

Scoring:

8-10 correct: Whoa! You're a Bible trivia pro. Great job!

5-8 correct: Not bad! Brush up on the stories of these women, then wow your friends with your Bible savvy!

3-5 correct: You're familiar with *some* stories, but you aren't really up on all these women in the Bible. Read more of their stories—you'll be amazed how God used them in extreme ways!

1-3 correct: Ooops. You have some basic Bible knowledge, but you need to be in the Scripture more. Choose a woman who sparks your interest, then read on for a fascinating tale. ★

Sarah Meekhof writes from Beacon, N.Y.

by Susan C. Hall

the blues sisters

Wallowing in self-pity gets three friends nowhere.

We sat in a booth at Tony's Pizza Place—Kate, Maggie and me. I'm Zoe. We were more like sisters than best friends—inseparable for as far back as we could remember, and we were all singing the blues.

"I studied for hours and hours for this midterm," Kate moaned, clutching her test papers in her hand. "And I came within an eyelash of flunking. Why didn't someone tell me how hard inorganic chemistry is? I just can't remember all this stuff." She tore the papers in half, then tore them again. "How am I going to get my college scholarship with *this* on my record?" Tears began to trickle down her face.

"It's just one class and one test," I muttered. "My whole life has been shot down. My story was rejected by another magazine. This time I got a form rejection slip that lists a bunch of reasons for the rejection. They'd checked off the one that read 'Problems with structure and/or style.' They hated my writing." I buried my face in my hands. "I'm no good," I whimpered through my fingers. "All I've ever wanted in my whole life was to be a writer, and I'm just no good."

"You both make me tired," Maggie said. "Bruce broke up with me last night. *I'm* the one whose life is over, and I'm supposed to sit here and listen to the two of you whine over the little stuff? I don't think so. I mean, for Pete's sake, Kate, there'll be more tests for you to take and do better on, and Zoe, you can write more stories; but the guy I love has dumped me. What could be worse?"

Now we were all sniveling. The pizza we'd ordered had turned cold and gooey, the onions and peppers shriveled, the cheese congealed. But we were all too miserable to eat. We sat sniffling but otherwise silent, all of us staring at the inedible pizza on the table before us. Kate fished a package of Kleenex out of her purse, pulled one out for herself, then one for Maggie and one for me. We all mopped our eyes and blew our noses.

"I'm quitting," I announced. "I'm never going to write again. I worked on that story for months. It's the absolute best I can do. And it's no good. I'm no good."

"You sound like a broken record," Maggie said.

I ignored her. "Seventeen years old, and I'm already a failure."

"I'm going to cheat," said Kate. "That's all there is to it. Ken Warbler is my chemistry partner, and he sits at the same table I do. He gets nothing but A's, and I can see his paper easily. Next test, I'm going to write down what he writes down. I don't have any choice. I have to pull in at least a B or I'm dead as far as a scholarship is concerned. No scholarship —no college."

Maggie was really crying now—making little gulping noises as she drew in each breath. "I'm going to get Bruce back," she said between whimpers. "I'm going to give him what he wants."

illustration by Paula Becker

Kate and I knew what that meant—Bruce had been pushing her to have sex.

"I don't want to do it," she went on, "but I don't know what else to do. I can't live without him. I just can't."

For the first time in our entire history together, the three of us stopped communicating. Conversation ceased. Instead, we all seemed to sink into ourselves—too deep in our own misery to give a rip about anybody else.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

I went to bed that night absolutely exhausted. The blues had worn me out.

I always pray when I go to sleep, but in my particular state of mind I wasn't exactly in the mood for prayer. Instead I asked God how He could disappoint me so much—making me want to write so badly and at the same time giving me no talent.

"It's not fair," I murmured.

Then a disturbing thought lodged itself in my mind. Maybe the Lord was disappointed *in me*. The idea refused to be pushed aside and began gaining momentum.

Was He seeing me as a self-pitying quitter?

I had to admit it. I knew the answer.

I began thinking about Kate and Maggie. All three of us could take awards in the self-pity department. And what about the solutions we'd arrived at? They were more pitiful than our self-pity.

Suddenly I had an idea for a story. I got up, went to my desk, turned on the light, blinked a few times and then sat down to write.

A Fresh Start

Since it was a Saturday, I called Kate and Maggie first thing in the morning and asked them to meet me for lunch at Alvarez Mexican restaurant. I could hear in their voices that they were still way down, but they agreed to come. I knew they would. I figured the deep, deep blues couldn't squelch our love for Mexican food.

"I'm writing a new story," I told them proudly as soon as we'd placed our orders.

"That's nice," said Kate without a trace of interest.

I got no response at all from Maggie, who looked drawn and pale.

I took a deep breath. "Don't you love the smell of Mexican food? I'm beginning to drool."

"What's with you?" Kate grumbled. "Yesterday you were so down you could hardly look at food. Today you're ravenous and positively brimming with good cheer."

"Well, I do feel better," I admitted. "Like I said, I'm working on a new story. It's pretty rough right now, but I think it might turn out okay."

"So you're not throwing in the towel after all?" Kate asked.

"Nope. I decided that quitting isn't my style. And I don't think cheating is yours, Katie."

Our orders came, and I attacked my

We all seemed to sink into ourselves—too deep in our own misery to give a rip about anybody else.

chicken enchilada. "Fabulous," I crowed after the first bite.

Katie toyed with her refried beans. "You're right, Zoe. Cheating isn't my style, but I don't know what else to do."

"I was thinking maybe you could ask Ken Warbler to tutor you."

Kate looked up from her plate. "No way. He's too shy. I don't think he'd . . ." She brightened. "But maybe he'd be flattered if I asked him. Maybe it would pull him out of his shell."

"It's worth a try," I said. "Katie, you get super grades in all your other classes. Maybe you just have a mental block when it comes to chemistry."

She nodded. "Yeah. I'm going to talk to Ken on Monday. I have six weeks till the next big test. That ought to give me enough time to figure out what an *ion* really is." She took a bite of her taco and smiled.

"I told you guys yesterday that neither one of your problems was big time," Maggie grumbled. "You've just proven me right by getting everything all solved—nice and easy. No sacrifice. No guilt. If I'm going to get Bruce back, I have to . . ."

"Find another guy," I said, finishing the sentence for her.

She shot me an angry look. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"That you ought to start dating other people," I said.

"I agree," Katie said. "As the old saying goes, there are other fish in the sea."

"But I'm in love with Bruce," Maggie whined.

"But it only goes one way, Maggie," I said. "He broke up with you, and you have to learn to live with it. Sure, he might be intrigued with you for a while if you agreed to have sex, but that's not love. On top of that, you'd be miserable because you'd be doing something you don't believe is right."

Tears filled Maggie's pretty brown eyes. "So there *is* no solution to *my* problem."

"Sure there is," Katie said. "You just get on with life."

Maggie shook her head, and I could see her eyes begin to puddle. "That's easy for you to say."

"Hey, it won't happen overnight," I said. "Katie won't conquer chemistry in the next 24 hours either, and it could be ages before I sell a story. I know you're going to have the toughest time of all, Maggie, but you gotta admit that there *is* a solution to your problem waiting for you somewhere down the line. It's called a *brand-new love.*"

Maggie picked up her fork and plunged it into her burrito. "Yeah—maybe you're right."

We wound up actually pigging out—just as we did before the blues set in.

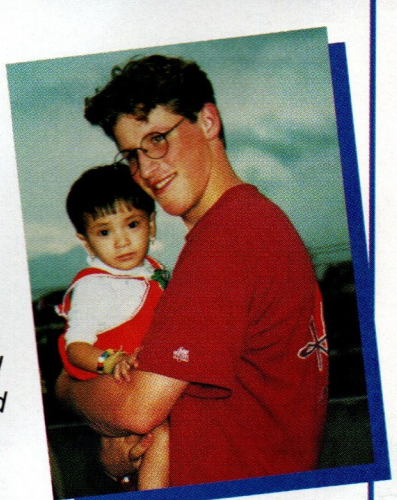
When I got home, I went to my room to work on my story. I read the first few lines aloud.

"We sat in a booth at Tony's Pizza Palace, Katie, Maggie and me. I'm Zoe. We were more like sisters. . . ." ★

Susan Hall lives in Rockford, Ill.

A Mission... to the nations

What are you doing for God this summer? Why don't you go on "A Mission To The Nations" with Teen World Outreach? We will send you overseas with hundreds of teens to one of twenty countries all over the world. Using mime, drama, puppets and tracts, you will be reaching out to thousands of people with the love of Jesus. You can also get your hands dirty, building orphanages, schools, churches and many other construction projects. Your missionary host will introduce you to a fascinating new culture and you will make friends that will last a lifetime. So, reach out and touch God's heart in the nations!! Join Teen World Outreach this summer and see what God will do through you!



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1997 Summer Trips
Romanian Orphanage Team, Russia, Australia, El Salvador, Germany, Ghana, Egypt, Japan, Tanzania, Barbados, Nepal, Fiji, India Orphanage Team ***and many more!!***

Have a Heart!

Want to be pampered this Valentine's Day? Do it yourself with homemade bath treats. Add your favorite fragrance and color to candles, bath salts, soaps and powder. They're great gifts for moms, sisters and friends, too.

by Susan Stevens

Helpful Hints:

- All the ingredients needed for these crafts can be found in a craft store or a supermarket. The prices listed here are approximate.
- Check with your mom about which pan she'd like you to use for making candles or soap.
- Potpourri oil works well if you have trouble finding fragrance oil that's specifically made for candles and soaps.
- Muffin tins make great molds for soaps and candles. Other options include salad and dessert molds, Dixie cups, measuring cups or anything else that's somewhat small and shallow.
- Craft stores usually carry an assortment of pretty bottles and jars for storing the bath salts and body powder. A salt shaker is a fun container idea for the powder!
- Be extra careful when using wax dyes and food coloring. Place a layer of waxed paper on countertops to avoid stains.

REG FRANCKLYN

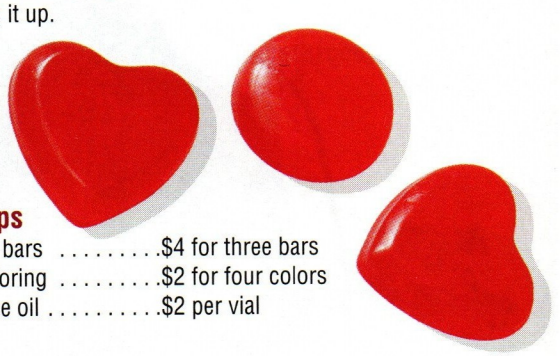
Calming Candles

supplies:
- paraffin (wax) . . . . . .$2.50 per pound box
- wax dye . . . . . .$2 for a large packet
- fragrance oil . . . . . .$2 per vial
- wick or twine . . . . . .$1 for one yard
- a mold
- 1 toothpick

Melt paraffin over *low* heat in a double boiler or thick pan. When wax has melted and is completely transparent, break off small pieces of wax dye and add them one at a time, stirring them into wax until the desired color is reached. Remove pan from burner and add five to 10 drops of fragrance oil, stirring gently.

Lightly coat the mold with a nonstick cooking spray. Cut a piece of twine or wick two inches taller than the mold. Wrap one end of the wick around a toothpick, then rest the toothpick across the rim of the mold. There should be a half-inch of wick resting on the bottom of the mold. You can pry it up from the wax once your candle has dried. Try to position the wick as straight as possible in the center of the mold so the candle will burn evenly. Carefully pour in the wax. Let it cool for one hour before removing it from the mold.

Cleanup: spilled wax is easily removed with a spatula. Let the wax cool before scraping it up.



Sumptuous Soaps

supplies:
- glycerin bars . . . . . .$4 for three bars
- food coloring . . . . . .$2 for four colors
- fragrance oil . . . . . .$2 per vial
- a mold

Microwave: Place glycerin bars (amount based on size of mold) in a microwave-safe bowl and heat on low for one minute. Repeat until glycerin has completely liquefied.

Stovetop: Melt glycerin over *low* heat in a thick pan or double boiler. Remove from heat when glycerin has liquefied.

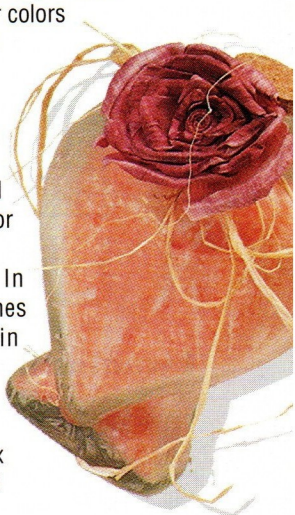
Stir in four drops of food coloring. Slowly add and stir until desired color is reached. Add five drops of fragrance oil (more if the mold is large).

Coat mold with a nonstick cooking spray. Slowly pour liquid soap into the container. Set aside to cool for three hours.

Fun variation: add oatmeal or ground-up loofah sponge to create an exfoliating soap.

Soothing Salts

supplies:
- Epsom salt . . . . . .$2.50 for a large carton
- food coloring . . . . . .$2 for four colors
- fragrance oil . . . . . .$2 per vial
- bottle, jar or butter tub



Pour two cups Epsom salt into a large bowl. Slowly add four drops food coloring; stir. Repeat until desired color is reached. Add five drops fragrance oil; stir. Let the salts dry for one hour, then place them in the container.

Pour a half-cup into your bath water. In addition to helping you relax, the salt soothes minor aches and pains. Can be used in combination with your favorite bubble bath.

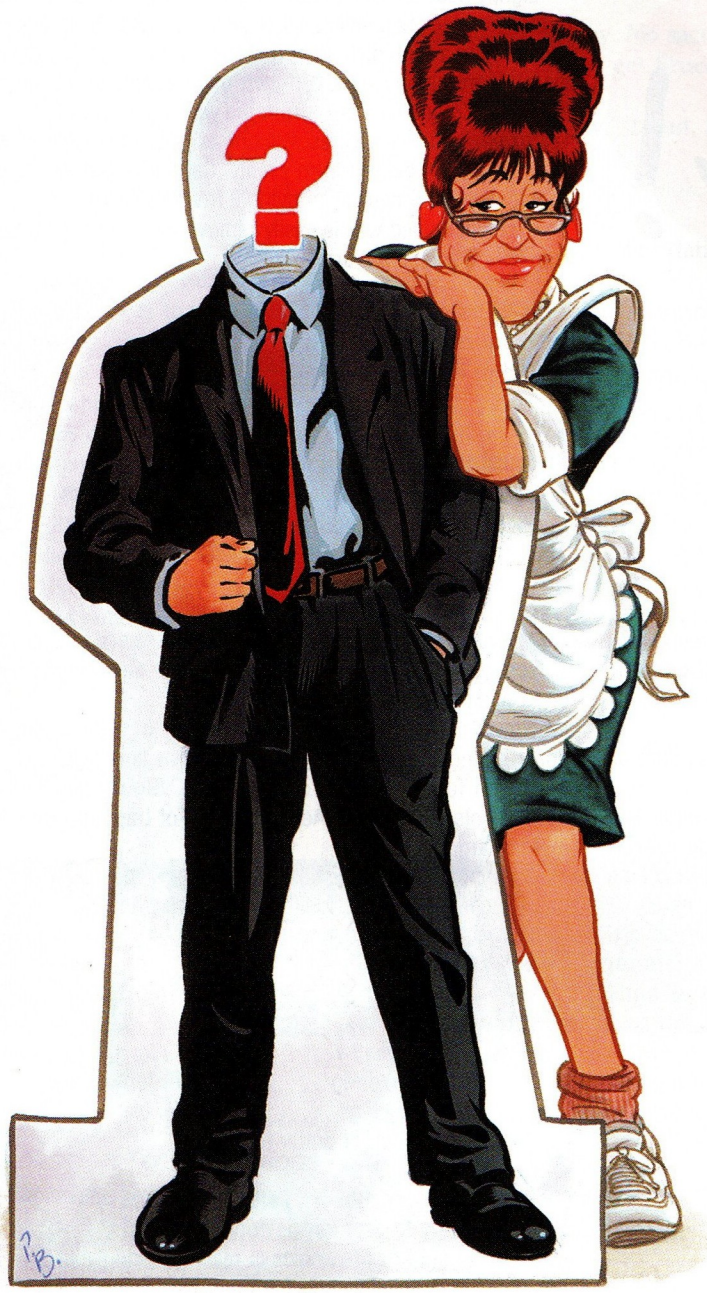
Pacifying Powder

supplies:
- cornstarch . . . . . .$2 per box
- fragrance oil . . . . . .$2 per vial
- container

Place one cup cornstarch in a large bowl. Add five drops of fragrance oil and stir. Set aside to dry for one hour. Carefully pour the powder into container. Apply after your shower or bath for softer, smoother skin. ★

the Cafeteria lady™

BY MARTHA BOLTON



PAT BINDER

The Perfect Date

I wanted someone who would bring me flowers . . . and not just during allergy season.

When I was looking for the man of my dreams, I had certain criteria I wanted him to meet.

I wanted someone who would always put me first . . . and not just when we were trying to cross the street in rush-hour traffic.

I wanted someone who appreciated good music . . . but would listen to my singing anyway.

I needed someone with nerves of steel (for all those times when I'd accidentally turn the wrong way down a one-way street).

I longed for an Indiana Jones type who wasn't afraid to cut through dense jungles or excavate his way through layers and layers of dirt . . . just in case he ever stopped by my house before I had a chance to clean.

I wanted someone who wasn't embarrassed to cry . . . but not in the middle of one of my piano recitals.

The man I was going to marry had to be a hard worker, someone who wasn't afraid of using his muscles and working up a sweat. (I knew it would be the only way he'd be able to cut through my meat loaf.)

I wanted someone who would bring me flowers . . . and not just during allergy season.

I was looking for someone who shared my three most important interests: chocolate, chocolate and chocolate.

I wanted someone who was an optimist—who sees the glass as half full, not half empty—and the fender of his car that I borrowed as half on, not half off.

I wanted someone who only had eyes for me . . . and not just on his donor card.

I needed someone who was brave, courageous and not afraid to face dangerous situations head-on. In other words, someone who, after we married, could handle seeing what I look like first thing in the morning.

I finally *did* find Mr. Right, the man of my dreams, and we've been together a lot of years. Aside from meeting the above qualifications, he has a great sense of humor, is warm and caring, and after inviting him over for dinner numerous times during our courtship, he's developed a cast-iron stomach. Now I ask you, what more could I ask for? "Love Connection's" Chuck Woolery couldn't have found me a better match!

Happy Valentine's Day! ★

Martha Bolton and her husband, Russ, have been married for 26 years and live with their three sons in Simi, Calif.

Stuff for Your Life... and Love Life!

Need a Conversation Starter?

Ever find yourself fumbling for words when you're talking to that guy who makes your heart flutter? In ***Opening Lines,*** *Brio's* Susie Shellenberger and former *Breakaway* editor Greg Johnson give it to you straight—458 easy ways to start a conversation when you're on a date. With questions about everything from Scriptures to parties to cleaning bathrooms, this book is a great way to get you talkin' with guys!

Opening Lines
**Suggested donation: $9 ($13 in Canada)* BP348

Hold on to God's Word!

How? By training for the ultimate "Vertical Adventure!"—it's a Scripture memory system like no other! Commit to memorizing a Bible verse a week this year and anchor yourself to the Rock! You'll love ***The Grip,*** the second pak of cards in the series that takes you through 40 Bible verses and review sections covering topics like relating with others, understanding God's power and seeing yourself with God's eyes. Request yours today!

The Grip (#2)
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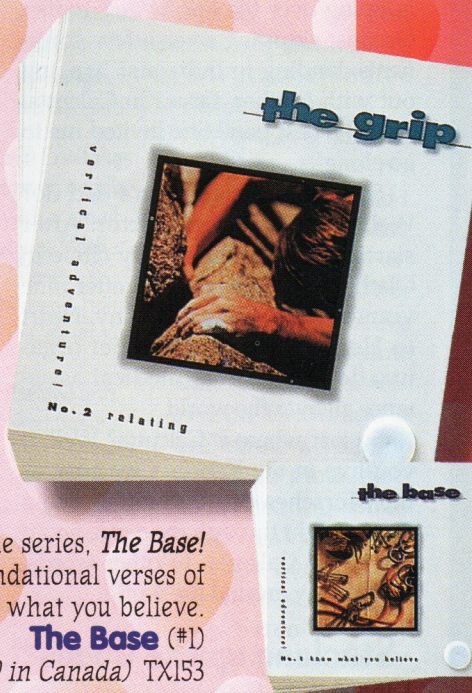
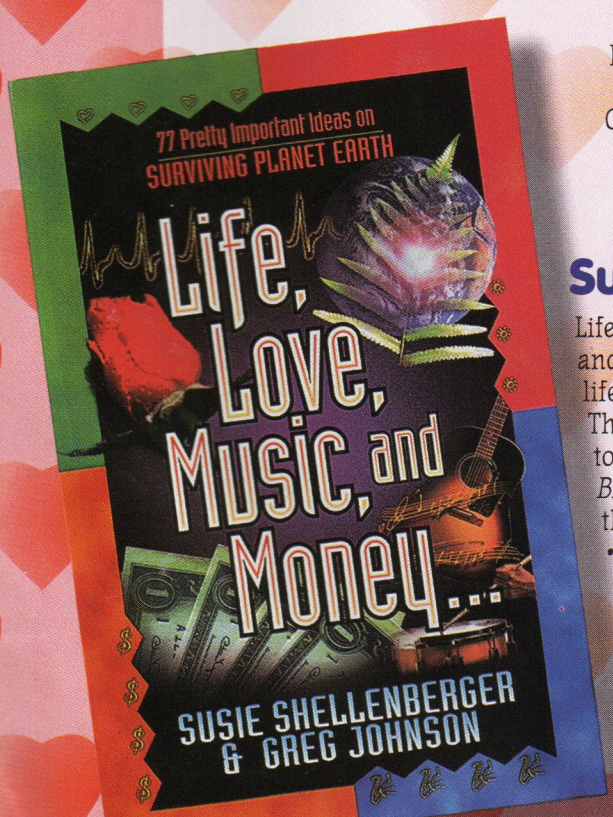


Be sure to collect the first pak in the series, ***The Base!*** It takes you through 22 foundational verses of Christianity to help you truly know what you believe.

The Base (#1)
**Suggested donation: $6 ($9 in Canada)* TX153



Survival Guide for Teens!

Life can be a mystery. So many things try to grab your attention and maybe even confuse you. Get straightforward answers to 77 of life's many baffling issues in ***Life, Love, Music, and Money . . .*** There's not enough room on this page to list all the insightful topics this paperback by Greg Johnson of *Breakaway* fame and *Brio's* Susie Shellenberger covers, so here are just a few things this book will help you do:

- develop a true sense of identity
- avoid the over-commitment trap
- make a difference for Christ
- set priorities
- discover life after school

Request yours and read one a day and be ready to laugh and learn!

Life, Love, Music, and Money . . .
**Suggested donation: $8 ($12 in Canada)* BP340

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To request any of this stuff, please see the envelope inside this issue.

Serving the Poo

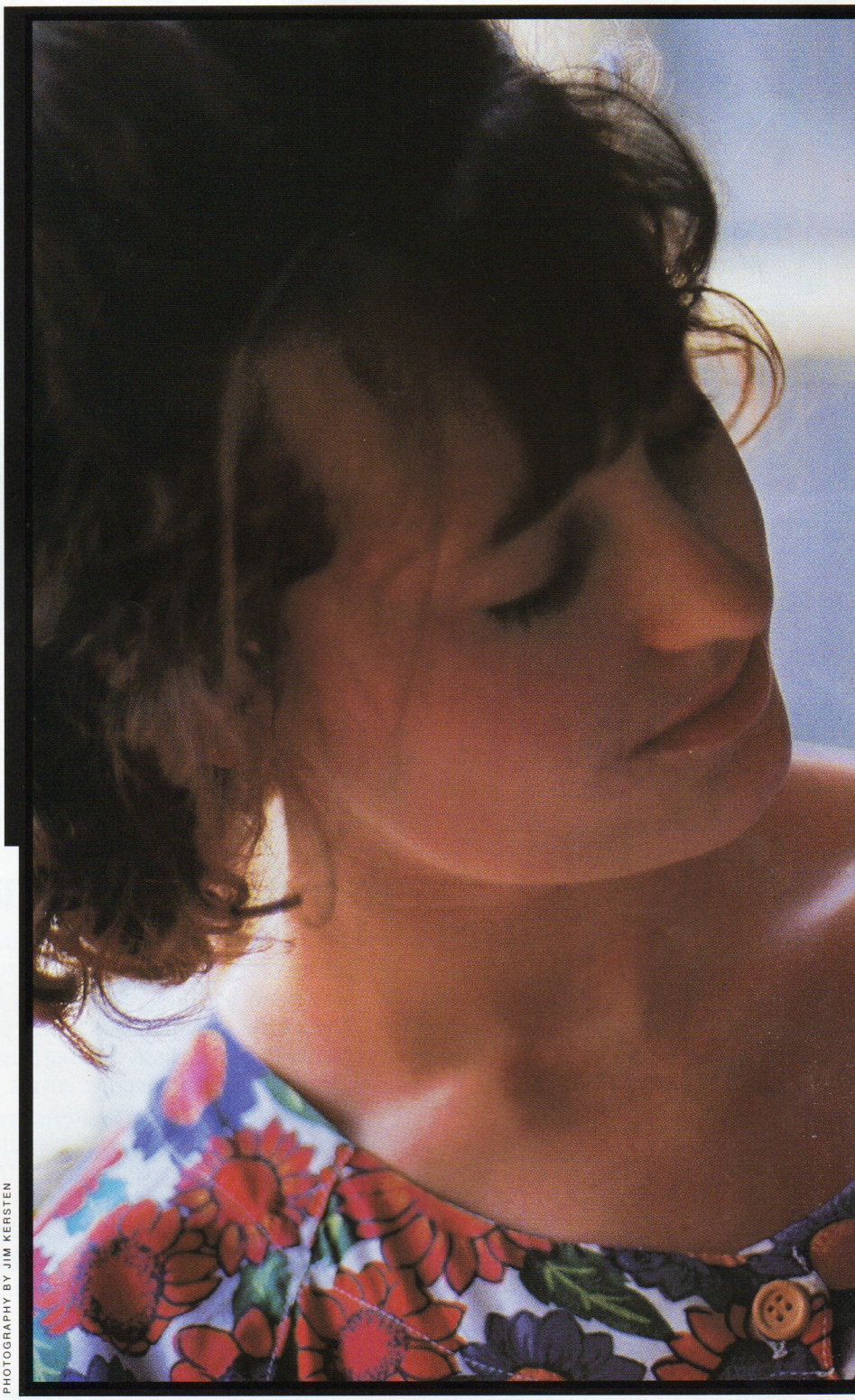
EVERY NOW AND THEN A TEEN girl will go to work with her dad. For many, that would mean walking into a classroom, dentist's office, conference area, construction site or factory. But for 17-year-old Erin Morsch, it meant boarding a DC-10, hopping over the Pacific and Indian Oceans, skipping over a few continents, landing in India and hanging out with Mother Teresa in Calcutta. And the best part? She invited me to go along!

So just what does Erin's dad do? Well, he's a medical doctor. After starting a Christian family clinic in Olathe, Kans., he resigned after nine years to start a new company, Heart to Heart, a 7-year-old relief organization that offers medical assistance all over the world.

So just where *is* Calcutta? Well, if you live in the Kansas City area, as the Morsches do, and could drill a hole straight through the earth, you'd end up in Calcutta. In other words, it's halfway around the world.

Stacking up the Goods

All the preparations for this trip didn't happen overnight. Erin's dad, Gary, had actually been planning this trip for more than a year. Through Heart to Heart, Gary got hundreds of people behind this airlift for India. Pharmaceutical companies donated 50 tons of medicines and medical supplies, plus enough toys for 10,000 children—all valued at $12 million. And to get it over there? Federal Express agreed to provide their largest cargo plane—an MD-11—and a crew to fly the supplies into Calcutta. (Just how BIG is an MD-11? It has two levels. The main level alone is almost 17,000 cubic feet—enough space to hold 65 adult elephants!) Our mission? To distribute medical aid to as many people as possible.

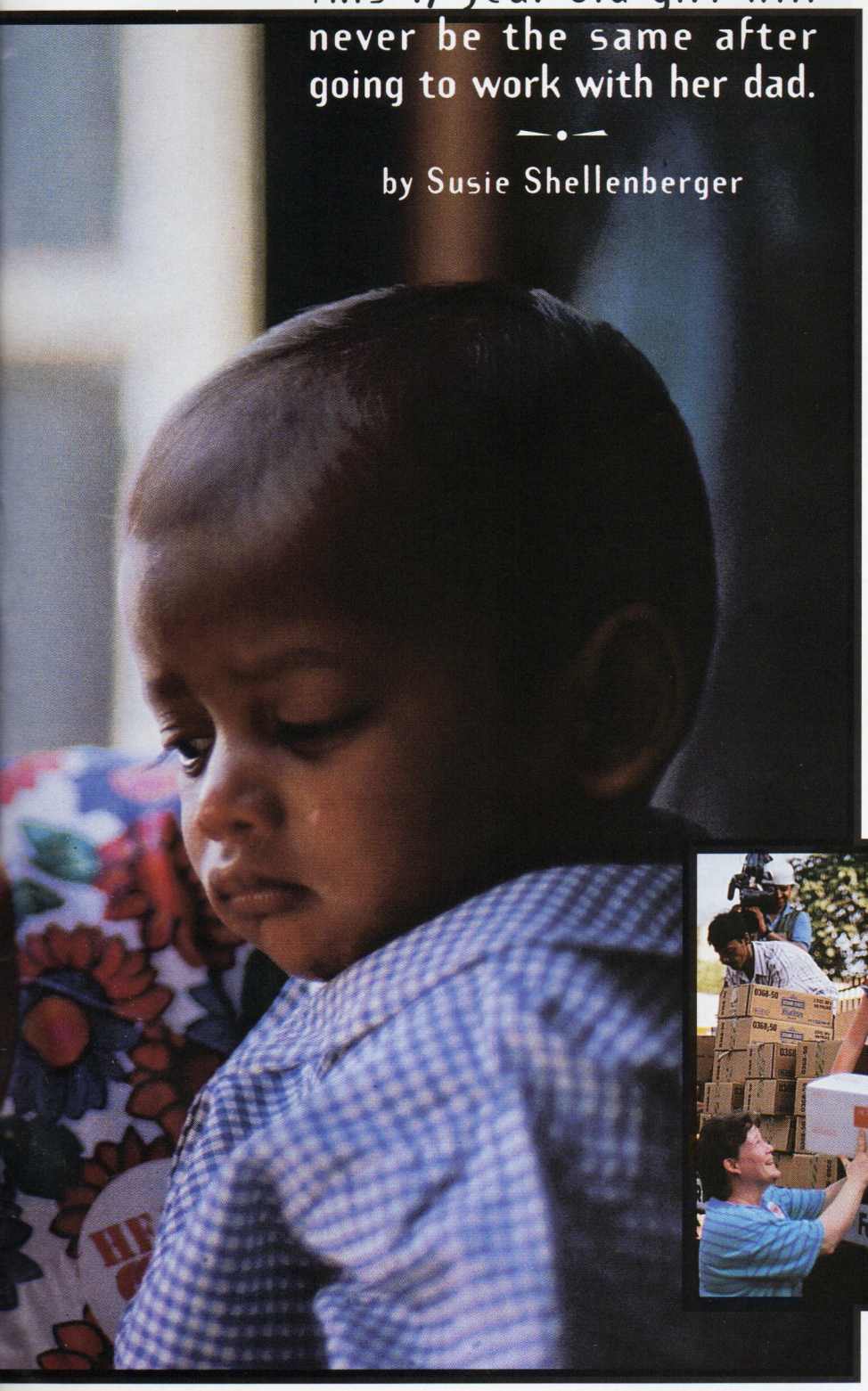


PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM KERSTEN

rest of the Poor

This 17-year-old girl will never be the same after going to work with her dad.

by Susie Shellenberger



Wanna join us? Come on! You can hang out with Erin and me, okay?

And We're Off!

I meet Erin, her older sister, Amy, their younger sister, Laurie, and their dad in Los Angeles. Joining the adventure with us are several doctors, dentists, nurses and hearing specialists who will provide free medical help once we arrive.

(Left) Erin takes time to cuddle with a small boy at Mother Teresa's Children's Home in Calcutta.

(Below) Erin and Susie unload and help distribute medical supplies to grateful recipients in India.

We have dinner together the first evening in India, and I ask Erin about the food. "It's different, isn't it?" she says. "But I'm used to eating weird food. One time Dad dared my sisters and me to swallow a live minnow. Since he travels so much, he's always eating something freaky."

I ask her what is the weirdest thing he's ever eaten and she tells me it was a snake heart that was still beating. "It's a delicacy in Vietnam," she says. I smile and feel grateful for the rice and curry we're chowing on.

The next morning we fly from New Delhi to Calcutta to meet the FedEx cargo plane with the supplies. We're not only excited to begin distributing the medical goods and toys, but we're also looking forward to meeting Mother Teresa—she's supposed to meet us at the airport. We learn when we arrive, however,

that as she was preparing to meet us, she fell and broke her collarbone and is unable to come.

And the Mission Begins

Erin and I visit the Sisters of Charity Children's Home—one of Mother Teresa's projects and one of many recipients of the airlift. When the truck arrives with toys and supplies, we help unload. Erin also spends a lot of time holding children. Some of these kids are just sick and will go home once they've been treated. Others are orphans—abandoned by their families once it was learned they were ill.

Though Erin doesn't know the language, she quickly makes several friends through her smile and gentle touch. By the end of the day, I've realized that *everyone*, no matter which part of the world or what language he speaks, just wants to be loved—something Erin is good at.

The next day Erin, her sisters and I head to the Assembly of God Hospital in Calcutta. We visit the children's ward, re-enact nursery rhymes, teach kids how to blow bubbles and give away a ton of balloon animals.

Another World

Later, we make a two-and-a-half-hour bus trip to one of Mother Teresa's leprosy centers. We walk through the facility and learn that this is actually a community unto itself. The 500 or more people who live here support themselves, growing their own food, making their own clothes and creating an environment where lepers feel secure and loved.

We learn that leprosy is a disease that attacks the nerve endings, meaning eventually the area affected will become numb. For example, if a person has the beginnings of leprosy in his foot, he may not even realize it. If he's barefooted he may walk over a burning coal or step on a nail and do severe damage to his foot. He may walk all day long on a damaged foot and not realize he's in danger because he can't feel the pain. Eventually, infection will set in, and he may have to have the foot amputated.

I can't help but think about the parallel between leprosy and sin. Like leprosy, sin also desensitizes us. When we get used to having sin in our lives—and when we become comfortable with it—we cease to feel the Holy Spirit's gentle nudge, and our hearts eventually harden.

The *good* news about leprosy is that it's treatable. Once someone contracts the disease, he has to take medicine every day for the rest of his life, but he can live a normal life. The *bad* news is that society won't *let* the leper live a normal life. Once it's known that someone has the disease, he's branded for life. He can no longer go to the grocery store, the theater, and in many cases, school.

Several years ago Mother Teresa saw the hopelessness that lepers felt, so she created leper colonies in a variety of places. Here, in a loving environment with medical care, people are able to live with dignity and meaning.

Oftentimes, when parents find out their child has leprosy, they drop him off at Mother Teresa's leprosy center and say to him, "You'll be treated here. As soon as you start to get better, we'll come get you." But they never come back. The child becomes an orphan.

Could Erin and I catch leprosy just hanging out with all the lepers? I find out that *most* of the world's populace is born with a natural immunity to the disease. It's only a small percentage who don't have the ability to fight it. To contract it, you have to spend extended periods of time around a leper and breathe the bacteria—as in being in the same family, breathing a sibling's germs, living with him, sleeping close to him, etc. We are assured we're in no danger hanging out at the leper colony for just one day.

A Different Life

Erin and I talk with 16-year-old Pratima Kherupal, who has leprosy in her feet. I glance down and see she

has only stumps for toes but notice that she's completely functional and walking around. She tells us that her knee joint has come loose, though, and she has no sensation in her feet. She can't put all her weight on them.

Pratima has a nose ring and a red dot on her forehead. She's Hindu. She wants us to take her picture, so we shoot some photos and talk with her through an interpreter. I ask if she lives here. "Only one month at a time," she says. She comes in for treatment on her feet and will stay 30 days, then go home for 30 days. She simply repeats this cycle of one month here, and one month home.

"How did you know you had leprosy?" I ask.

"I guess I had leprosy in my feet but didn't know it," she says. "I don't know for how long. Then, one day, as I was walking in the street a car ran into me—over my feet. I had no feeling. When I was taken to the doctor, he told me I had leprosy, and that's why I wasn't able to feel the pain."

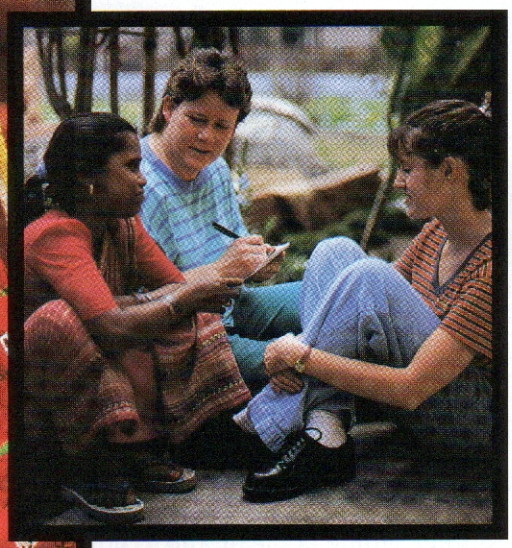
"So how has your life changed because of leprosy?" I say.

"I don't get to see my friends anymore," she responds. "I no longer get to go to school."

Even though she's not a Christian, Erin and I ask if we can pray with her.

City of Joy?

I take a walking tour with Erin, her dad and her two sisters. We walk through the City of Joy—an ironic name, considering the neighborhood is known for its poverty—and learn that 2,500 people jump the train and come into Calcutta every day. The sights, the smells, the sounds—it's all like something out of *National Geographic*. People bathe and do their laundry in the same water. We walk through a Hindu temple and notice an altar where animal sacrifices are made. Beggars line the street, and people are carted to various places in little carriages like Japanese rickshaws run by manpower—literally.



Erin makes friends with a sick little girl yearning to be loved.

Susie and Erin ask 16-year-old Pratima how her life has changed since becoming afflicted with leprosy.

At Death's Door

Finally we arrive at the place called Home of the Destitute and Dying, where society's rejects are brought to die.

As Erin and I walk through the door, I gasp. To my left are rows and rows of emaciated men, some with open wounds, some curled into a fetal position—all dying. To my right, on the other side of the building, are rows and rows and emaciated women—one whose skin on her leg has literally worn away, exposing her bone—lying on cots only inches off the floor.

Images of concentration camp victims pop into my head. I never imagined I'd see anything worse. Now I have.

After touring the facility, Erin's dad asks if any of us would like to stay and work. It doesn't take us long to realize that's exactly what Jesus would do.

We tell the nuns to use us anywhere we're needed. We start on the top floor folding LOTS of laundry—bed gowns and aprons. Then we head downstairs and help feed the women. I watch as Erin cradles an elderly blind woman and tries to feed her. Eventually Erin realizes that, more than food, the woman simply wants to be loved. Erin gently strokes her hair and just holds her for the afternoon. ➵

The Morsch family (counter clockwise from front left): Graham (10), Mrs. Vickie Morsch, Erin (17), Dr. Gary Morsch, Amy (20) and Laurie (15).

growing up never sounded so good

out of eden
more than you know

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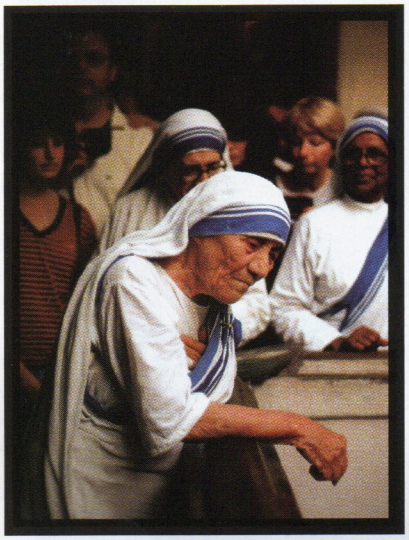
"Erin, don't you wish you could talk to her in her language?" I ask.

"Yeah, I do," she says. "But a smile is universal. It echoes love. Even though she can't *see* my smile, I think she *feels* it and knows I care."

Mother Teresa

At the Mother Home, where Mother Teresa lives, she takes time to talk with our group. Her hands are worn and gnarled—yet really soft. Her feet are almost disfigured in the plain sandals she wears. She invites Erin to come back someday and work in Calcutta.



At the Mother Home, where Mother Teresa lives, she takes time to talk with our group.

The Mother Home is clean and simple. No washing machines, dishwashers, stoves or microwaves. Food is prepared over an open fire, and they eat exactly what they serve the lepers, the destitute and the dying.

"Mother Teresa believes she and the Sisters of Charity shouldn't live more extravagantly than those they serve," Erin explains. "So they don't fill their lives with extras or nonessentials."

Back Home

After a week in India, we leave Calcutta and fly back to New Delhi. By the time we board our departing flight from India to head home, it's Easter Sunday. Because we cross the International Date Line, we spend Easter morning in four different countries—and keep turning our watches back.

We leave India on Easter morning and arrive in Hong Kong on Easter morning. We then fly to Tokyo . . . and arrive on Easter morning. From there, we head to Los Angeles and arrive . . . on Easter morning. (I guess if you have to keep living a day over and over, Easter is a great choice!)

During layovers Erin and I compare notes of her week of going to work with Dad. "This experience has been more powerful than any missions trip I've ever been on," she says. "It was cool to be a part of something so incredible with my dad—to see him at work and to be working at his side.

"Right now I don't feel a full-time call to foreign missions, but I *am* called to be a missionary right now in my immediate world. There are so many people I can witness to at school, which in essence is feeding them when they're hungry—showing them Christ.

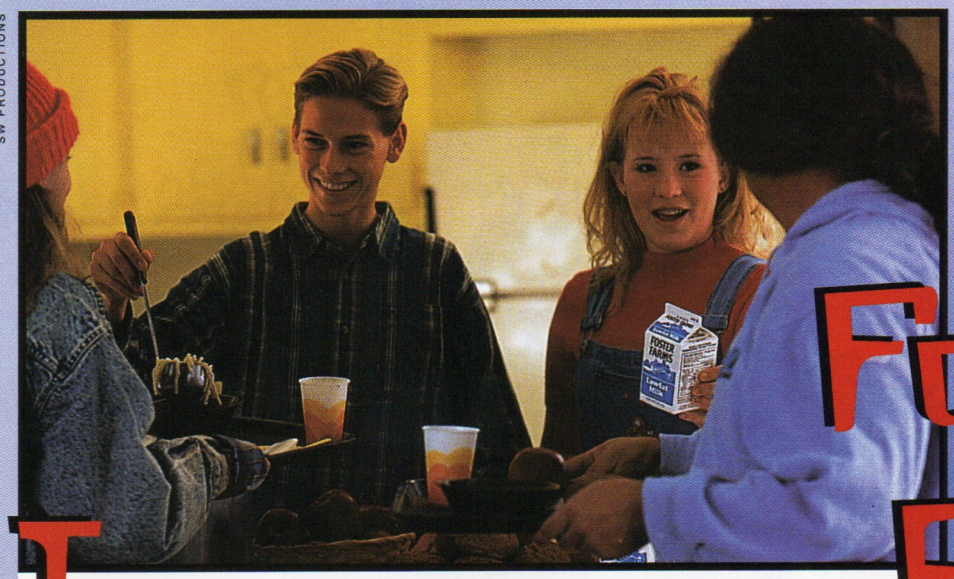
"My goal," she says, "is to reach people at my school who have no hope. They have a family, but because they don't know Christ, they have no hope. They know *about* Him, but they don't really *know* Him. They haven't *accepted* Him. I want those people to see Christ in my life."

Later, Erin and I reminisce about the trip. "My priorities are different now," she says. "Material things aren't as important anymore. I've realized it's much more valuable to have my soul in order than to collect stuff. I want to be remembered not as someone who accomplished a lot or made a bunch of money, but as someone who lived like Jesus."

To Work We Go

Erin's dad recently returned from Russia and will be in China this April. Heart to Heart uses a lot of volunteers each trip to help unload and distribute medical supplies throughout a specific country. Everyone pays his or her own way. If you and a parent are interested in volunteering a week abroad, please contact: The International Programs Office, Heart to Heart International, 1520 State Street, Suite 105, San Diego, CA 92101, (619) 687-0343.

And if you'd like to drop Erin a note, you can write her at: Erin Morsch, 13849 S. Murlen Road, Suite F, Olathe, KS 66062. ★



SW PRODUCTIONS

Forever and Ever?

Choosing a lifetime love may not be easy.

by Susie Shellenberger

It *sounds* easy. Romantic movies glamorize falling in love and getting married. Romance novels simplify finding the perfect mate. So **we tend to think it's an easy process.** Most of us think that the person with whom we fall in love is the one we'll marry. After all, isn't *love* the prerequisite for marriage?

Well, yes . . . and no.

The truth is, we can actually fall in and out of love with *several* people before we find the one with whom God wants us to spend the rest of our lives. **Just because we're in love with someone doesn't necessarily mean that's whom we're supposed to marry.** There's a much deeper issue at stake than simply being in love.

Try to see the big picture. Strive to look past the honeymoon and instead focus on whether he'll be a good father. **Think about God's plan for your life.**

The real prerequisite for marriage is found in the answer to this question: Can this person and I *together* do and be more for God than I could by staying single?

If the answer is yes and you're both in love with each other, you've met the requirement for a lifetime commitment. If the answer is no, you have *no business* even *considering* marriage with this person.

Now, if you're thinking, *But if I don't marry THIS person, there may not be anyone else* . . . then **there's a deeper issue at stake,** and that's trusting God with His perfect plan for your life.

Brio sisses, here's a great verse to memorize and hang on to:

"But these things I plan won't happen right away. **Slowly, steadily, surely,** the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day!" (Habakkuk 2:3). ★

There's more where this came from! Flip back to page 17 and request your own copy of the book Life, Love, Music and Money: 77 Pretty Important Ideas on Surviving Planet Earth *by Susie Shellenberger and Greg Johnson. Bethany House Publishers.*

Tired of Feeling Like a Bump on

Increase your cool quotient!

by Angela Elwell Hunt

Okay, so maybe you're not the most popular girl in school. Your phone doesn't ring off the hook with people calling you for advice or to hear your witty jokes. You have one good friend—or maybe two—but they're as quiet as you are. Sometimes you catch your mom shaking her head and wondering if you'll *ever* be popular. Trouble is, sometimes *you* wonder that, too.

It's not that you're weird or anything, you just feel . . . blah. Sort of like a moth in a world of butterflies. Other girls can walk into a room and light the place up with their smile, their jokes or their friendliness, but you're just . . . there—a lump in the chair, a bump on the log of life. You'd *like* to do something to jazz up your social life, but it's easier to sit and be still. After all, Mom loves you, Dad loves you, and Jesus thinks you're great. Does what other people think really matter?

Yeah. It does. We're not saying you should change your personality, but there *are* things you can do to dust a little sparkle over your public image. If you're a quiet kind of girl, you may always be calm by nature—and that's okay. But if you're painfully shy, there are things you can do to make social occasions a little less painful.

Fact No. 1:
Sparkling personalities aren't afraid to talk.

Even if you stutter or speak with an accent, people will be more interested in what you have to say than how you say it. *Some* people might even think your unique way of expressing yourself is cool! So open up; let the world hear your voice!

Fact No. 2:
Sparkling personalities always have something to say . . . or ask.

Whoa! you may be thinking. *I can talk, but I don't know what to say!* Anyone can start a conversation with a simple question like "Where do you go to school?" But after you hear the answer, then you're stuck with nothing to say again! Ask questions that begin with "If you could . . ." "When did you . . ." or "Why do you think . . ." Questions like these will launch you into a conversation before you know it! Best of all, they all contain the magic word—*you!*

It's far better to open conversations with an introduction ("Hi. I'm Beth. What's your name?") and then branch out into something pleasant like "I really like that sweater you're wearing. Green looks good on you. How do you put your clothes together so well?"

In practically one breath you've managed to be friendly, complimentary, and you've given your companion a chance to give you more than a one-word answer. You've established yourself as someone who's natural, charming, and, if your compliment was sincere, a person of remarkably good taste! Best of all you're conversing!

Fact No. 3:
Sparkling personalities consider other people's feelings.

Beauty calls attention to its owner, but *charm* focuses its attention on others. If you want to have a sparkling personality, you'll have to stop worrying so much about yourself. If a new girl comes into school and sits at the desk across from you, after 10 minutes she won't know or care that you're shy. She's probably thinking, *This girl next to me is a real snob! I've been here 10 minutes, and she hasn't even looked up at me.*

You may be a natural introvert, but it won't hurt you to smile! And when class is over, the rewards of asking, "Well, how was your first day?" far outweigh the advantages of remaining silent and isolating people who *could* be real friends.

Fact No. 4:
Sparkling personalities celebrate their uniqueness.

Being pleasant doesn't mean you have to agree with everything going on

a Log?

KIM WILSON BRANDT

around you. If the guy you're trying to talk to says he hates the music playing in the background, he won't think you're a geek if you gently say, "Really? I like it. Maybe it has to grow on you."

Do you think Shaquille O'Neal is embarrassed because of his height? No way! If there's something special about the way you look or think, be yourself. People generally like people who are different. If we were all the same, the world would be a pretty boring place. Don't be afraid to admit that you eat spinach, or that you raise lizards, or that your favorite hobby is stamp collecting. Celebrate yourself and the gifts God gave you!

Fact No. 5:
Sparkling personalities aren't afraid to laugh.

In the old movie *Mr. Hobbs Takes a Vacation,* a father pays a teenage boy five bucks to spend some time with his daughter at a party. The guy does, then leaves the girl alone. When Daddy asks why he left her so quickly, the boy says, "Is something wrong with her mouth? I mean, she never laughs, and she keeps it all squinched up." When Daddy explains that his daughter has just gotten braces, the boy understands completely—he has worn them, too!

Girls who can't or won't laugh at a joke make everyone else feel uncomfortable. People who never smile make everyone else feel melancholy. Smile! Laugh! If you can laugh, especially when something goes wrong, you're showing everyone that you have a sense of humor and that you know you're not perfect. You'll put everyone else at ease. Best of all, a smile is a girl's most valuable beauty aid. It can turn a plain girl into a beauty and a beauty into . . . wow!

There are things you can do to dust a little sparkle over your public image—without changing your personality.

Fact No. 6:
Sparkling personalities usually have a sparkling package to match.

You know what I mean. The most popular kids in your school may not necessarily all be thin, athletic and beautiful, but they basically have their physical act together. They comb their hair, brush their teeth, wear clean clothes and use a little DEO for the B.O. (That's deodorant for the body odor, for the acronym-impaired.)

To sum it all up, you can enhance your personality quotient if you smile, talk, ask "you" questions, remain true to yourself and take a little time to tend to the outward package. Cool personalities come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and you don't have to settle into your bump-on-the-log mode if you're not shaped like Miss XYZ Personality from gym class or have the verbal skills of a debate team. You're *you,* and you're worth knowing. So take a chance this week. Get off your log and show the world your God-given sparkle! ⋆

Angela Hunt lives and sparkles in Seminole, Fla., where she writes books. Ask your local Christian bookstore salesperson for one of her 53 books.

What We Think

When it comes to the opposite sex, EVERYONE has something to say!

"God tells us in 1 Samuel 2:30 that He will honor those who honor Him. How can we do that? By avoiding situations in relationships that lead us into temptation.

"It's normal to have feelings of attraction toward the person we're dating, but we must remind ourselves daily that our bodies belong to the Holy Spirit first, then as we enter into marriage, to our spouse, but NOT to our boyfriend or girlfriend. Stand for God's honor, and He will bless you for it."

—Pam Thum

"Learn to treat your male friends with the same care and respect with which you treat your female friends, and you'll avoid a lot of unnecessary headaches!"

—Linda Elias, Tuesday's Child

"How can teens establish godly dating relationships? Here's my simple formula: Talk with God about each other. Talk with each other about God. Talk with God together."

—Brian Barrett

"When trying to live a sexually pure life, have a plan. It's not rocket science to know when you're exposing yourself to temptation. Set your standards and stick to them. If someone won't respect you for wanting to live by godly principles, they'd make a lousy date anyway. It comes down to this: What do you want to be on your wedding night? Pure? Then realize that the choices you make *now* will determine the outcome."

—Geoff Moore

letter from lindy

THOUGHTS FROM THE 1997 *BRIO* GIRL

I was driving by the park a few weeks ago and saw a little barefoot kid in a bright red Superman cape attacking unseen foes. The cape was waving in the wind as he dove off the jungle gym, totally engrossed in a world created by his imagination.

What a trip down memory lane! Do you remember when we were little? We'd get out the safety pins and Mickey Mouse beach towel and then parade into the kitchen where good ol' Mom transformed an average 6-year-old into a superhero. When that cape was on, we could be *anybody*—the princess, the mighty warrior, the explorer of unseen lands—*nothing* could stand in our way!

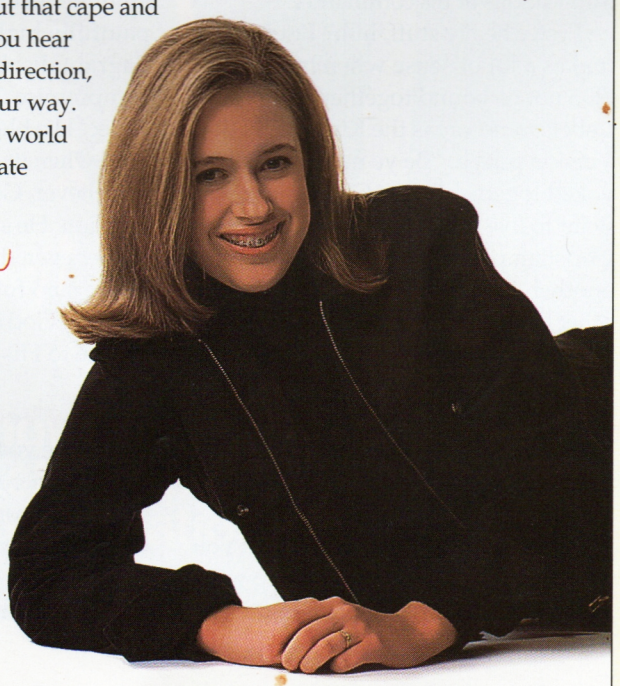
As we've grown up, the now faded cape has been hung away in the closet between the pink tutu and the Sesame Street footie pajamas, and our invincibility went with it. *But*, as God's kids, we have to realize that He has a dream for each of our lives—even bigger than being Superwoman! I have learned that I need to stop talking for a while and listen. And when I am willing, God begins to grow His dream in my heart. Before too long, it becomes a desire, then a passion, then something to live for. We *can* go anywhere, be anyone and conquer any foe as long as the cape of His Holy Spirit is fastened around us. There is a *Brio* sis right now who is going to become an evangelist, another *Brio* sis who will be a singer and still other sisses who will be moms teaching their children to love Jesus with their whole hearts.

God has been doing some gardening in my heart, and I have a growing dream to go into the unreached places of Africa and share the message of Jesus with the people there. Sounds impossible at times, but I'm learning never to underestimate the power and creativity of our heavenly Father.

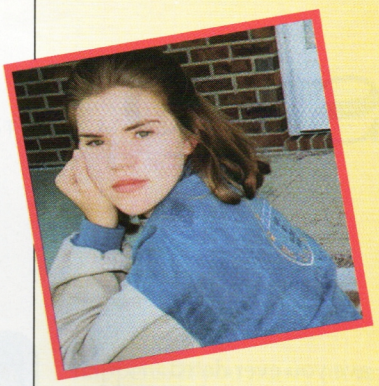
Maybe you're thinking, *Yeah, sure, Lindy. I'm trying to figure out how to get through tomorrow, and you're asking me to figure out what I'm supposed to do with my life?* That's my question too, and God is showing me I can't figure it out on my own, and I don't have to know tomorrow! Right now . . . for today . . . just begin thinking about your gifts and the things you enjoy. Did you know you *like* those things for a reason? God gave them to you to use for His service and glory!

So be a kid again. Dig out that cape and start to dream. And once you hear God's voice and sense His direction, don't let anything get in your way. Hey girls, let's conquer this world for Jesus Christ—our ultimate Superhero!

Lindy Morgan



You can write to Lindy c/o Brio, P.O. Box 35500 Colorado Springs, CO 80935-3550



Last June we announced that Clay Crosse was giving away his tour jacket. Angela Tatum, from Turkey, N.C., is sporting the jacket she won.

I love Clay's music, so winning the jacket is a real treat! I was at Governor's School when you called, but Mom relayed the news.

I really appreciate Brio magazine. It sure is encouraging to know that there are other TRUE Christian teen girls. Your ministry means a lot to me.

Your Brio Sis,
Angela Tatum

Hello! I'm Sarah French from Panama! Thanks for the Clay Crosse T-shirt I won from the June 1996 Brio contest. I wear it a lot!

We have a big variety of birds, snakes, iguanas, sloths, monkeys and other animals here in Panama. I recently found a parakeet at the edge of the jungle by my house, so I adopted him and named him Sam. I also taught him how to talk.

Any of my Brio sisses like to write? You'll need more than a 32-cent stamp, but I'd love to hear from you!

Sarah French
PSC 01 Box 5163
APO, AA 34001

Unequally Yoked

The truth about dating non-Christians.

by Kim Boyce

Have you ever dated someone who you knew was not right for you? My first boyfriend was a non-Christian. To this day I don't remember how or why I got involved with him; I guess he and I just hit it off at school, and, before we knew it, we were an item. Our school was extremely small, and if you dated the same person twice, or were seen talking in the halls, you were practically committed for life. Fortunately for both of us, we didn't get that far.

Why would a Christian want to date a nonbeliever? Loneliness, sometimes. Boredom. A sense of excitement from doing something dangerous. All of these are reasons Christians sometimes begin dating non-Christians.

Frequently, the explanations are much more simple. "There aren't any cute Christian guys around this town!" is a common lament among Christian young women.

In some parts of the country, that may be true. Usually, though, it's just an excuse. More often than not the person who says such a thing is trying to live for Jesus while still trying to keep one foot in the world. That sort of Christian life doesn't work.

I know. While growing up I used to say that same sort of thing even though my family and I attended a 5,000-member church that had more than 500 teens in the youth group! And I had the audacity to say, "But there aren't any good-looking Christian guys here. . . ."

Now that I'm older and a happily married woman, I look back and think, *There really were a lot of attractive guys and girls in my youth group.* But you would've had a hard time convincing me of that back then.

A Voice of Authority

In 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, the apostle Paul has some firm words for Christians who want to remain tied to worldly influences. Although the passage is relevant to many areas of our lives, including business and financial dealings, it is most often applied to dating and marriage relationships. Take a minute to read what Paul says, then come back and let's think about the implications of his commands.

Pretty heavy stuff, huh? But Paul makes a lot of sense when he says, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers" or, as the King James Version puts it, "Be ye not unequally yoked together." As a Christian you want to live one way; your non-Christian partner wants to live another. You're pulling against each other. You are unequally yoked.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not getting down on you for dating a non-Christian. I know how easy it is to slide into such a slippery relationship. I've been there. But I *am* saying it's risky business.

The most dangerous risk is that you may lose out in your relationship with Jesus. You've seen it happen to others. They are dynamic Christians, head-over-heels in love with Jesus. Then they get involved with non-Christians, and before you know it their spiritual lives get wiped out completely.

Many Christians have disregarded God's Word, dated a non-Christian, fallen in love, gone ahead and married an unbeliever, and then paid a painfully high price for his or her flagrant disobedience. You cannot compromise God's Word and still expect His blessing on a relationship. And when it comes to marrying an unbeliever, God has clearly stated His position. He says don't do it! So why bother even dating a non-Christian? There's no future in it. To put it bluntly: God doesn't bless disobedience to His commands.

A Risky Venture

Maybe you believe you will convert your partner to Christ before or after the two of you get married. Many naive Christians have thought something similar only to be sorely disappointed. The fact is, it rarely

SW PRODUCTIONS

happens. If you marry an unbeliever, barring a miracle you will probably spend the majority of your marriage in compromise, misery or both with someone whose attitudes about love, sex, marriage, commitment and a host of other subjects may be worlds apart from yours.

Who needs that, especially when God promises such incredible blessings to those who separate themselves from unholy relationships?

With all this in mind, you may be wondering whatever happened to my first boyfriend and me. The beginning of the end came when I heard my youth pastor preach a sermon based on the Scripture we've been examining. I had heard plenty of inspirational sermons, but this one seared right into my heart. I knew I had to break it off with my unbelieving boyfriend.

It was a major turning point in my life when I sat down at our kitchen table, with tears streaming down my face, and wrote a letter to my boyfriend explaining, as best I could, that I could no longer continue our relationship because I was a Christian and he was not. Needless to say he did not take it well. Nor did he understand. We didn't speak to each other throughout the entire next school year. That hurt.

Years later I was doing a series of concerts in Mexico when a young man named Arturo told me that many Mexican Christians were having trouble because of unequally yoked relationships. "Somebody should write a song about that," he remarked casually.

I tucked his words in the back of my mind, and when I began writing the lyrics for my second album the Lord brought them to the forefront. The song that grew out of those experiences is called "Not for Me." ➵

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Here are some of the lyrics:

They said you came from the wrong side, baby
But I did not care
I wanted you more than anybody, baby
So much love we could share

But now I hear what they were sayin' to me
In the middle of love it's so very hard to see
that . . .

He's not for me
He doesn't know my Savior
Not for me
Had to let him go, oh, no
He's not for me
He would only want to change me
Not for me
Oh, no

Seems that I always have to learn my lessons
In the saddest ways
I get my heart in the very worst positions
Hope I learn someday

Words that come from a caring friend
Are only to save me heartache in the end
'cause . . .

He's not for me. . . . ★

Contemporary Christian artist Kim Boyce lives in Nashville with her family.

Selected from In Focus *with Ken Abraham. Reprinted with permission from Chariot Family Publishing. Request your copy from the envelope at the center of this magazine.*

Read Through the Bible With Brio!

This month's read-through-the-Bible features Exodus, Leviticus, Matthew and Mark. You'll also enjoy the passages from Proverbs and Psalms. Read them with your mom or a friend.

Feb. 1 Ex. 13:17–15:18 • Matt. 21:23-46
Ps. 26:1-12 • Prov. 6:16-19

Feb. 2 Ex. 15:19–17:7 • Matt. 22:1-33
Ps. 27:1-6 • Prov. 6:20-26

Feb. 3 Ex. 17:8–19:15 • Matt. 22:34–23:12
Ps. 27:7-14 • Prov. 6:27-35

Feb. 4 Ex. 19:16–21:21 • Matt. 23:13-39
Ps. 28:1-9 • Prov. 7:1-5

Feb. 5 Ex. 21:22–23:13 • Matt. 24:1-28
Ps. 29:1-11 / Prov. 7:6-23

Feb. 6 Ex. 23:14–25:40 • Matt. 24:29-51
Ps. 30:1-12 / Prov. 7:24-27

Feb. 7 Ex. 26:1–27:21 • Matt. 25:1-30
Ps. 31:1-8 • Prov. 8:1-11

Feb. 8 Ex. 28:1-43 • Matt. 25:31–26:13
Ps. 31:9-18 • Prov. 8:12-13

Feb. 9 Ex. 29:1–30:10 • Matt. 26:14-46
Ps. 31:19-24 • Prov. 8:14-26

Feb. 10 Ex. 30:11–31:18 • Matt. 26:47-68
Ps. 32:1-11 • Prov. 8:27-32

Feb. 11 Ex. 32:1–33:23 • Matt. 26:69–27:14
Ps. 33:1-11 • Prov. 8:33-36

Feb. 12 Ex. 34:1–35:9 • Matt. 27:15-31
Ps. 33:12-22 • Prov. 9:1-6

Feb. 13 Ex. 35:10–36:38 • Matt. 27:32-66
Ps. 34:1-10 • Prov. 9:7-8

Feb. 14 Ex. 37:1–38:31 • Matt. 28:1-20
Ps. 34:11-22 • Prov. 9:9-10

Feb. 15 Ex. 39:1–40:38 • Mk. 1:1-28
Ps. 35:1-16 • Prov. 9:11-12

Feb. 16 Lev. 1:1-3:17 • Mk. 1:29–2:12
Ps. 35:17-28 • Prov. 9:13-18

Feb. 17 Lev. 4:1–5:19 • Mk. 2:13–3:6
Ps. 36:1-12 • Prov. 10:1-2

Feb. 18 Lev. 6:1–7:27 • Mk. 3:7-30
Ps. 37:1-11 • Prov. 10:3-4

Feb. 19 Lev. 7:28–9:6 • Mk. 3:31–4:25
Ps. 37:12-29 • Prov. 10:5

Feb. 20 Lev. 9:7–10:20 • Mk. 4:26–5:20
Ps. 37:30-40 • Prov. 10:6-7

Feb. 21 Lev. 11:1–12:8 • Mk. 5:21-43
Ps. 38:1-22 • Prov. 10:8-9

Feb. 22 Lev. 13:1-59 • Mk. 6:1-29
Ps. 39:1-13 • Prov. 10:10

Feb. 23 Lev. 14:1-57 • Mk. 6:30-56
Ps. 40:1-10 • Prov. 10:11-12

Feb. 24 Lev. 15:1–16:28 • Mk. 7:1-23
Ps. 40:11-17 • Prov. 10:13-14

Feb. 25 Lev. 16:29–18:30 • Mk. 7:24–8:10
Ps/ 41:1-13 • Prov. 10:15-16

Feb. 26 Lev. 19:1–20:21 • Mk. 8:11-38
Ps. 42:1-11 • Prov. 10:17

Feb. 27 Lev. 20:22–22:16 • Mk. 9:1-29
Ps. 43:1-5 • Prov. 10:18

Feb. 28 Lev. 22:17–23:44 • Mk. 9:30–10:12
Ps. 44:1-8 • Prov. 10:19

Verse listing taken from The One Year Bible. *Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.*

Holly and the IVY HALLS
YOUR HEAD'S IN THE CLOUDS, JAZZ. WHAT'S UP?
OH, HOLLY, I'M IN LOVE! THERE'S A NEW MAN IN MY LIFE.
HE'S SOOO CUTE . . . BIG BROWN EYES . . . THE SWEETEST FACE . . . THE MOST ADORABLE NOSE . . .
OOOPS, THERE'S THE BELL FOR CLASS. YOU HAVE TO COME OVER AFTER SCHOOL AND MEET HIM.
RIIING
AND SO, AFTER SCHOOL . . .
JAZZ HAS A BOYFRIEND AND I DON'T. I SHOULDN'T ENVY HER . . . I SHOULDN'T ENVY HER.
SIGH I DO ENVY HER.
HERE HE IS, HOLLY! MY NEW YORKIE. ISN'T HE EVERYTHING I SAID . . . AND MORE?
BUT . . . HE'S . . . A . . .
PUPPY.
?
HE . . . YOU . . . HE . . . YOU MADE IT SOUND LIKE HE WAS A NEW BOYFRIEND.
PEANUT? MY BOYFRIEND?
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